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Presidential Memoranda

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2 December 1965

NSA Declassification/Release Instructions on File.

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

There seems to be a situation developing in North Vietnam and South China which, when viewed in perspective, is of such importance I consider it wise to bring it to your personal attention.

Beginning in about June of this year the Chinese Communists began to introduce military units into North Vietnam and to establish a military communications network capable of supporting a fairly large force in the China-Vietnam border area. [redacted] 25X1 NSA

25X1 NSA [redacted] Nevertheless, we have some confidence 25X1 NSA in the judgment that these units are concerned with construction and logistics tasks and that they constitute considerably more than skeleton staffs. They appear to be engaged in the repair, reconstruction, and security of the vital railway lines which run northeast and northwest from Hanoi to the Chinese border. We believe that these construction and logistics units could now total over 20,000 men.

25X1 NSA [redacted] major deployment of Chinese ground combat troops toward the border or into North Vietnam itself.

[redacted] 25X1 NSA

[redacted] the Chinese have put themselves in the position to 25X1 NSA give greater material assistance to Hanoi or, if the Peking regime decides it is in its own interests to do so, intervene with their own forces.

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These developments, plus continuing efforts in South China to improve airfields, strengthen air defense forces and take air-raid precautions in major cities, add up to a posture of increased military readiness. This posture is probably intended to stiffen Hanoi's resolve, to give the North Vietnamese more economic and military support, and to prepare against the eventuality that those efforts might involve the Chinese Communists in a war with the United States. We do not believe the Chinese have made a decision to enter the war overtly in force; indeed we have estimated that they will not intervene in this way unless Chinese territory comes under attack or unless the existence of the North Vietnamese regime is directly threatened. In any case, these recent Chinese Communist activities are getting closest scrutiny by the Intelligence Community, and prudence requires them to be taken into account in our own forward strategic thinking.

Respectfully yours,

/s/
W. F. Raborn
Director

cc: The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
The Honorable McGeorge Bundy

CONCUR:

/s/ Ray S. Cline
Deputy Director/Intelligence

25X1

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